Canadian Courant Extra.

MONTREAL:
SUNDAY MORNING, December 28, 1813

WASHINGTON CITY, December 7, 1813.

This day at twelve o'clock the President of the United States transmitted the following MESSAGE to both Houses of Congress by Mr. Coles, his Secretary.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

IN meeting you at the present interesting conjuncture, it would have been highly satisfactory if I could have communicated a favorable result to the Mission charged with negotiations for restoring peace. It was a just expectation from the recent date to the distinguished Sovereign who had invited them by his offer of Mediation, from the readiness with which the invitation was accepted on the part of the United States, and from the pledge to be found in an act of their Legislature for the liberality which their Plenipotentiaries would carry into the negociations, that no time would be lost by the British government in embracing the experiment for hastening a stop to the effusion of blood. A prompt and cordial acceptance of the Mediation on that side was the less to be doubted as it was of a nature not to admit rights or pretensions on either side to the decision of an umpire, but afforded merely an opportunity honorable and desirable to both, for discussing, and if possible adjusting them for the interest of both.

The British Cabinet, either mistaking our desire of peace for a dread of British power, or misled by other fallacious calculations has disappointed this reasonable anticipation. No communication is from our Envoys having reached us, on information on the subject has been received from that source. But it is known that the Mediation was declined in the first instance, and there is no evidence, notwithstanding the lapse of time, that a change of disposition in the British Councils has taken place, or is to be expected.

Under such circumstances, a nation proud of its rights, and conscious of its strength, has no choice but an exertion of the one in support of the other.

To this determination, the best encouragement is derived from the success with which it has pleased the Almighty to bless our arms both on the land and on the water.

While proofs have been continued of the enterprise and skill of our cruizers, public and private, on the ocean, and a new trophy added to the exploits of a British by an American vessel of war, after an action giving celebrity to the name of the victorious commander; the great inland waters, on which the enemy were also to be encountered, have presented achievements of our naval arms, as brilliant in their character as they have been important in their consequences.

On Lake Erie the squadron under command of Captain Perry, having met the British squadron, of superior force, a sanguinary conflict ended in the capture of the whole. The conduct of that officer, adroit as it was daring, and which was so well seconded by his comrades, justly entitles them to the admiration and gratitude of their country; and will fill an early page in its naval annals, with a victory, never surpassed in lustre, however much it may have been in magnitude.

On Lake Ontario, the station of the British commander-in-chief on the waters, transient and hostile as the Armament was intended to bring on a decisive action. Captain Chauncey was able, however, to establish an ascendancy on that important theatre; and to prove, by the manner in which he afforded every thing possible, that opportunities only were wanted, for a more shining display of his own talents and of the gallantry of those under his command.

The success on Lake Erie having opened a passage to the territory of the enemy, the officer commanding the North Western Army transferred the war thither; and [illegible] ing the hostile troops fleeing, with their savage allies, forced a general action, which quickly terminated in the capture of the British, and dispersion of the savage force.

The result is equally honorable to Major-General Harrison by whose military talents it was prepared, to Colonel Johnson and his mounted volunteers, who led impetuous conset gave a fatal blow to the ranks of the enemy; and to the militia of the volunteer militia equally brave and patriotic, who had an interesting part in the issue; more especially to the chief Magistrate of Kentucky at the head of them, whose heroism, signalized in the war which established the independence of his country, a right at an advanced age, a share in hardships and activities, for maintaining it's rights and its safety.

The effect of these successes has been to rescue the inhabitants of Michigan from their oppressions, aggravated by gross infractions of the capitulation, which subjected them to a foreign power; to alienate the savages of numerous tribes from the enemy, by whom they were disappointed and mortified, and to recover an extensive region of country from a merciless warfare which desolated its frontiers, and imposed on it enormous military services.

In consequence of our naval superiority on Lake Ontario, and the opportunity afforded by it for concentrating our forces by water, operations which had been previously planned, were set on foot against the possessions of the enemy on the St. Lawrence. Such, however, was the delay produced in the first instance, by adverse weather of unnatural violence and continuance, and such the circumstances attending the final movements of the army, that the prospect, at one time so favorable, was not realized.

The enmity of the enemy, in enlisting the savages into a war which a sense of mutual comfort in mitigating its calamities, has not been confined to any one quarter. Wherever they could be turned against us, no exertions to effect it have been spared. On our South Western border, the Creek tribes, who yielding to our persevering endeavours, were gradually acquiring more civilized habits, became the unfortunate victims of seduction. A war in that quarter has been the consequence, infuriated by a bloody fanaticism recently propagated among them.

It was necessary to crush such a war before it could spread and settle among those tribes, and before it could draw reinforcements of the enemy into that vicinity. With this view a force was called into the service of the United States from the states of Georgia and Tennessee, which, with the nearest regular troops, and other corps from the Mississippi territory, might not only chastise the savages into present peace, but make a lasting impression on their fears.

The progress of the expedition, as far as is yet known, corresponds with the spirited and rich [illegible] and the best hopes of a satisfactory issue are authorised by the complete success with which a well planned enterprize was executed against a body of hostile savages, by a detachment of the volunteer militia of Tennessee, under the gallant command of General Coffee; and by a still more important victory over a larger body of them, gained under the immediate command of Major-General Jackson; an officer equally distinguished for his patriotism and his military talents.

The economic perseverance of the enemy in courting the aid of the savages in all quarters, and the natural effect of kindling their ordinary propensity to war into a passion, which even among those best disposed towards the United States, was ready, if not employed on our side, to be turned against us. A departure from our protracted forbearance to secure the services tendered by them, has thus been forced upon us. But in yielding to it, the retaliation has been mitigated as much as possible both in its extent and in its character, stopping far short of the example of the enemy, who owe the advantages they have occasionally gained in battle, chiefly to the number of their savage associates, and who have not controlled them either from their usual practice of indiscriminate massacres on defenceless inhabitants, or from scenes of carnage without a parallel, on prisoners to the British arms, guarded by all the laws of humanity and honourable war.

For these enormities, the enemy are equally responsible, whether with the power to prevent them they want the will, or with the knowledge of a want of power they still avail themselves of such instruments.

In other respects the enemy are pursuing a course which threatens consequences most afflicting to humanity.

A standing law of Great Britain naturalizes, as is well known, all aliens, complying with conditions limited to a shorter period than those required by the United States; and naturalized subjects are, in war employed by her government in common with native subjects. In some of the British provinces, regulations promulgated since the commencement of the war compel all persons of the United States, being there under certain circumstances, to bear arms; whilst of the native emigrants from the United States who compose much of the population of the province, a number have actually borne arms against the United States within their limits; some of whom after having gone on, have become prisoners of war, and are now in our possession. The British commander in that province nevertheless, with the sanction, as appears, of his government, thought proper to select from American prisoners of war, and send to Great Britain for trial as criminals, a number of individuals, who had emigrated from the British dominions long prior to the state of war between the two nations, who had incorporated themselves into our political society, in the mode prescribed by the laws of the province of Great Britain, and who were made prisoners of war, under the banners of their adopted country, fighting for its rights and its safety.

The protection due to those citizens requiring an effectual interposition in their behalf, a like number of British prisoners of war were put into confinement, with a notification that they would experience what ever violence might be committed on the American prisoners of war sent to Great Britain.

It was hoped that the necessary consequence of the steps inevitably taken on the part of Great Britain would have led her government to reflect on the inadmissiveness of its conduct, and that a sympathy with the British, if not with the American sufferers, would have arrested the cruel career opened by its example.

This was unhappily not the case. Intimidation both of commissioned and of humanity, American officers and non-commissioned officers, to double the number of British soldiers confined here, were ordered into close confinement, with formal notice, that in the event of a retaliation for the death which might be inflicted on the prisoners of war sent to G. Britain for trial, the officers or some of them would be put to death also. It was notified at the same time, that the commanders of the British flags and armies on our coasts are instructed in the same event, to proceed with a destructive severity against our towns and their inhabitants.

That no doubt might be left with the enemy of war adherence to the retaliating resort imposed on us, a correspondent number of British officers prisoners of war in our hands, were immediately put into close confinement, to abide the fate of those destined by the enemy; and the British government has been apprized of the determination of this government, to retaliate any other proceeding against us, contrary to the legitimate modes of warfare.

It is not fortunate for the United States that they have it in their power to meet the enemy in this deplorable contest, as it is honorable to them that they do anticipate it for under the most imperious obligations, and with the humane purpose of effectuating a return to the established usages of war.

The views of the French government on the subjects which have been so long committed to negociation have received no elucidation since the close of your last session. The Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at Paris, had not been enabled, by proper opportunities, to press the objects of his mission, as prescribed by his instructions.

The militia being always to be regarded as the great bulwark of defence and security for free states, and the consideration having been submitted to the national authority a use of that force, as the best provision against an unsafe military establishment, as well as a reason peculiarly adapted to a country having the extent and the exposure of the United States, I recommended to Congress a revision of the militia laws for the purpose of securing, more effectually, the services of all detachments called into the employment and pay of under the government of the United States.

It still deserves the consideration of Congress also, whether, among other improvements in the militia laws, justice does not require a regulation, under due precautions, for defraying the expence incident to the first assembling as well as to the subsequent incidents of detachments called into the national service.

To give to our military, naval and private, the requisite advantage, in their trade, is of more importance than long should have been, but for them alone, and their gallant use of the powers of privateering. With this view I recommend to Congress the expediency of such legal provisions as may supply the defects, or remove the doubts of the executive authority to allow to the cruizers of other powers, at war with the enemies of the United States such use of the American ports and markets as may correspond with the privileges enjoyed by such powers in American ports.

During the year ending on the 30th Sept. last, the receipts into the Treasury have exceeded 37 millions and a half of dollars, of which, near twenty-four millions were the produce of loans. After meeting all the demands for the public service, there remained in the Treasury on that day, near seven millions of dollars. Under the authority contained in the act of the 2d of August last, for borrowing [illegible] millions of dollars, the sum has been obtained on terms more favorable to the United States, than those of the preceding loans, made during the present year. Further sums, to a considerable amount, will be necessary to be obtained in the same way during the ensuing year; and from the increased capital of the country, from the fidelity with which the public engagements have been kept, and the public credit maintained, it may be expected on good grounds, that the necessary pecuniary supplies will not be wanting.

The expences of the current year, from the multiplied operations falling within it, have been early the severe. But on a just estimate of the campaign, in which the most of them has been incurred, the cost will not be found disproportionate to the advantages which have been gained. The campaign has indeed, in its latter stages, in one quarter, been less favorable than was expected, but in addition to the importance of our naval success, the progress of the campaign has been filled with incidents highly honorable to the American arms.

The attacks of the enemy on Craney Island, on Fort Meigs, on Sackett's Harbor, and on Sandusky, have been vigorously and successfully repulsed; nor have they in any one succeeded on either frontier, excepting when directed against the defenceless dwellings of individuals, or villages unprepared or ill guarded.

On the other hand, the achievements of the American army have been followed by the reduction of York, and of Fort George, Erie, and Malden by the recovery of Detroit and the extinction of the Indian war in the west; and by the occupancy or command of a large portion of Upper Canada. Battles have also been fought on the borders of the St. Lawrence, which though not accomplishing their entire objects, reflect honor on the discipline and prowess of our soldiery, the best auguries of eventual victory. In the same scale are to be placed the late successes in the south, over one of the most powerful, which has become one of the most hostile tribes of the Indian race.

It would be improper to close this communication without expressing a thankfulness, in which all ought to unite for the numerous blessings with which our beloved country continues to be favoured; for the abundance which overspreads our land, and the prevailing health of its inhabitants; for the preservation of our internal tranquility, and the stability of our free institutions; and above all, for the light of Divine truth, and the protection of every man's conscience in the enjoyment of it. And while among our blessings we cannot number an exemption from the evils of war; yet these will never be regarded as the greatest of evils, by the friends of liberty, and of the rights of nations. Our country has before preferred them to the degrading condition which was the alternative, when the choice was drawn in the same scale; it gave birth to another generation, and time will show, or compare the magnitude, and feel the value of that glorious event, will shrink from a struggle to maintain the high and happy ground on which it placed the American people.

With all good citizens, the justice and necessity of resisting wrongs and usurpations no longer to be borne, will sufficiently outweigh the privations and sacrifices, inseparable from a state of war. But it is a reflection, moreover, peculiarly consoling that while wars are generally aggravated by their baneful effects on the internal improvements and permanent prosperity of the nations engaged in them, such is the favored situation of the United States, that the calamities of the contest into which they have been compelled to enter, are mitigated by improvements and advantages of which the contest itself is the source.

If the war has increased the interruptions of commerce, it has at the same time enriched and multiplied our manufactures, so as to make us independent of all other countries for the many essential branches for which we ought to be independent on one; and is every speedily giving them an extent which will create additional staples in our future intercourse with foreign markets.

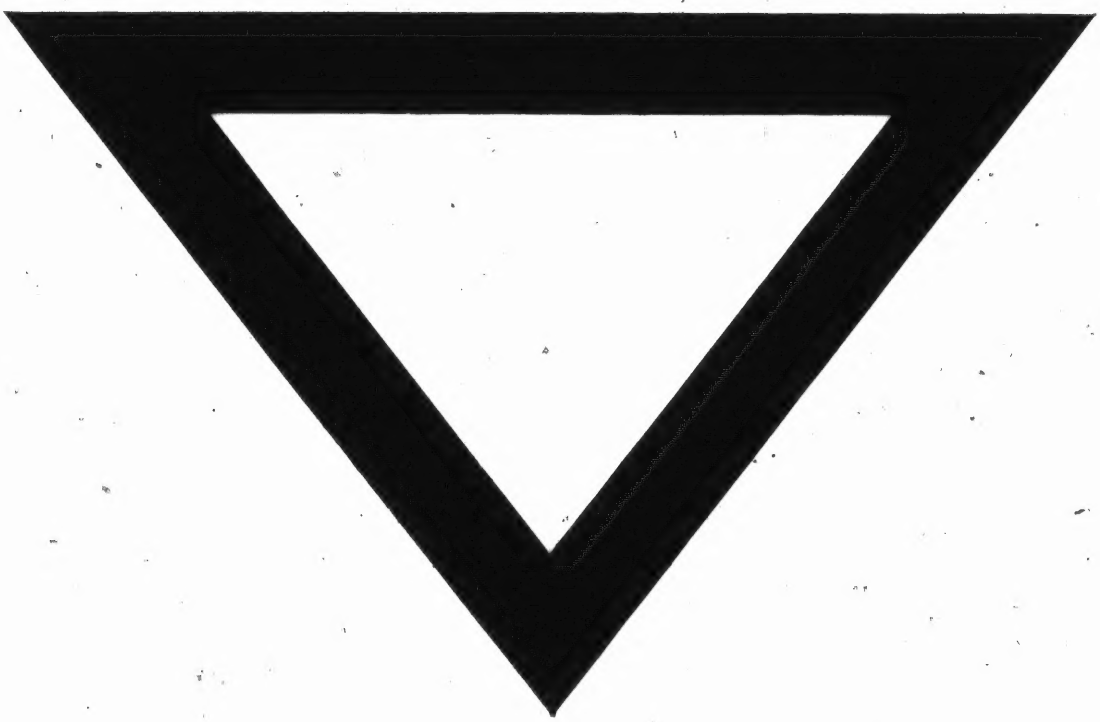
If much treasure has been expended, no inconsiderable portion of it has been applied to objects durable in their nature, and necessary to our permanent safety.

If the war has exposed us to increased spoliation on the ocean, and to predatory incursions on the land, it has developed the national means of retaliating the former, and of providing protection against the latter; demonstrating to all, that every blow aimed at our maritime independence is an impolitic accelerating the growth of our maritime power.

By diffusing through the mass of the nation the elements of military discipline and instruction, by augmenting and cherishing warlike preparations, applicable to future use, by evincing the zeal and value with which they will be employed, and the cheerfulness with which every necessary burden will be borne; a greater respect for our rights and a longer duration of our future peace are promised, than could be secured without these proofs of the national character and resources.

The war has proved, moreover, that our free government, like other free governments, though slow in its early movements, acquires in its progress a force proportioned to its freedom; and that the union of these states, the guardian of the freedom and safety of all, and of each, is strengthened by every occasion that puts it to the test.

In fine, the war, with all its vicissitudes, is illustrating the capacity and the destiny of the United States to be a great, a flourishing, and a powerful nation; worthy of the friendship which it is disposed to cultivate with all others; and authorised, by its own example, to receive from all an observance of the laws of justice and reciprocity. Beyond these their claims have never extended; and in vindicating for them, we have but a right for our acquiescence in the daily improvement and increasing harmony throughout the nation, and may humbly repose our trust in the smiles of Heaven on so righteous a cause.

JAMES MADISON.

Washington, Dec. 7, 1813.